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July 17, 2011

Liem Vu

While Bono is busy saving the world from poverty, Lenni Jabour is tackling a lesser-known problem: Neglected pianos.

The 40-year-old Canadian singer, along with a pair of string players, is on a crusade to hold impromptu concerts with pianos found in public spaces.

"There are pianos that have signs saying 'do not touch' or they're just sort of abandoned there with no explanation," said Jabour, who has worked in Canada's local indie music scene for over a decade.

"They tend to be treated like furniture, which is fine, but everyone should play it."

On Sunday afternoon, the blue-eyed singer snuck up to the cafeteria area of a Loblaws in Forest Hill and fixed her gaze on a black, baby grand piano.

It was nursing a broken c-key, but Jabour didn't judge.

She kicked off her five-song set with an upbeat, original pop song called 'A Little Sad,' prompting half a dozen patrons to perk their ears and flash tiny grins.

"It's fabulous. It's lovely. I didn't know this was going to happen," said Doris Rothenberg, 80, hunching over her coffee.

Rothenberg visits Loblaws every week for a coffee and said it was a welcome change to a typically quiet afternoon.

Janette Cabral heard about the guerilla performance through Facebook and decided to drop by after grocery shopping.

"I think it's great. It's bringing music to an unexpected space. Every time I see her, she's having so much fun," said the 28-year-old.

Taking the title of 'biggest fan' at the concert was Jabour's 20-month-old daughter Nadege, who pranced around in her pink-striped dress.

This is the second pop-up concert Jabour has organized.

Last May, she played to a noticeably larger crowd at the Hazelton Lanes atrium in Yorkville before security intervened. She flirted, asked them to sing along, and slipped in another song before leaving.

On Sunday, Loblaws employees walked by without reacting.

Jabour said she has found seven or eight more places to hold pop-up concerts in the following months. But until then, her focus is back on her domestic responsibilities.

"I'm going to go buy groceries with my family now and watch the polo match."



Anna Atkinson, viola, Alex McMaster, cello and Lenni Jabour, piano, played for about twenty minutes on the mezzanine level of the Forest Hill Loblaws on St. Clair.

Keith Beaty/Toronto Star